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THE
REMONSTRANCE
OF THE COMMONS
OF
ENGLAND,

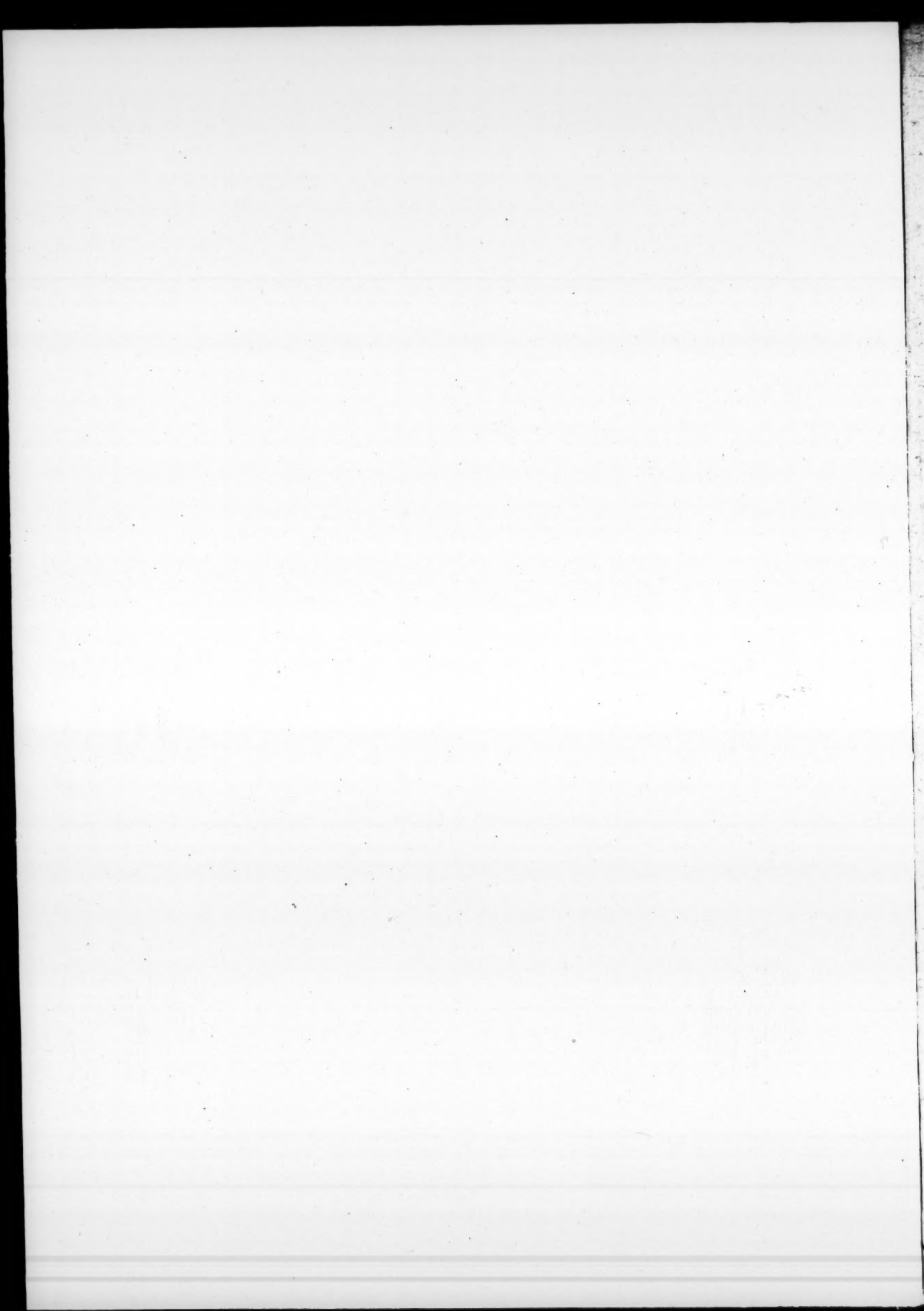
TO
The House of Commons
assembled in PARLIAMENT:

*Preferred to them by the hands of
the S P E A K E R.*



Printed in the Yeare M.DC.XLII.

May. 7. 1642/3



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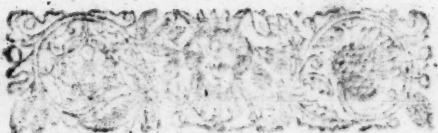
ENGLAND

TO

The House of Commons

assembled in Parliament

Printed for the House of Commons
by the SPEAKER



Printed in the year MDCXIII

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THE REMONSTRANCE of the Commons of England to the House of Commons assembled in Parlia- ment, preferred to them by the hands of their SPEAKER.

Master Speaker,



Rejunge us not, we pray you, because the title of this paper is a Remonstrance, not a Petition; the cause is, for that Petitioners have had the successe of late yee the matter will be the same though the forme differ.

We send this (what soever ye will call it) to the Honourable House of Commons, who are the representative body of the whole Commons of England, and we desire to present it by you, who are the Speaker of that House.

The end of our desire is Peace, and we hope we shall not erre in the way, when we intreate you to be our Mediator. After Speaker, all that we desire of you, is to deliver this to the House, to procure it to be read, and to receive as good an answer unto it, as you may.

And now we addresse our selves to the honourable House it selfe.

Vhen this Parliament was called (after severall unhappy breaches of some former) we comforted our selves with

an hope of a redresse of all our grievances, & we made choice of you for our *Knights, Citizens, & Burgeses*, to serve for us there, and we did put our confidence in you, and beleaved that you according to our trust without any by-respects, would have studied onely the peace and good of the Kingdome; and we cannot be yet out of hope, but that ye will performe it in the end.

But you must not take it amisse, if as persons greived we tell you where our greifes lie. And to prepare our cure the better we must desire you to call to your remembrances,

1. That we are still the true body of the commons of England; you, but the representative.

2. That wee have not so delegated the power to you, as to make you the governors of us & of our estates; you are in truth but our Procurators, to speake for us in that great Councell.

3. That in right we ought to have access to those whom we have thus chosen, and to the whole House, as there shall be caule, to impart our desires unto you, and you ought not to refuse us.

4. That by involving our votes in yours, we had no purpose to make you perpetuall Dictators.

5. That we never intended, that you should have that latitude of power as to imbarke us all in a Civill Warre, to the destruction of us and our posterities.

6. Much lesse had we thought, that by any your votes ye would or could draw us into any Acts of disloyalty or disobedience against our naturall Leige Lord, to whom by the lawes of God and man, we doe owe and will pay all allegiance and fidelity.

Wherefore we must claim this freedom which belongs unto us, as free borne Subjects, and as persons interested in the good and safety of this Kingdome, as well as your selves; that ye will speedily take those things into your wise and Religious Considerations, which belong to our peace, and which we out of the deep sence of our present miseries, and of the apparent ruine of us all (if not timely prevented) do now offer unto you.

None

None of which shall be any new fancies, or dreames of dis-
temper'd braines, but shall be such as have their grounds up-
on apparent truth, and a cleere evidencoe.

For first, we doe professe to all the world that we are resol-
ved with our lives and fortunes to maintaine the true Pro-
testant Religion established by the Lawes in this Church of
England: To maintaine our well settled Government under a
Monarchy, according to the knowne Lawes of this Land: To
maintaine the just liberties of our persons and property of our
Estates, according to the Rule of those Lawes: To maintaine
the just Priviledges of Parliament, without which our Lawes
can hardly be continued.

And in the asserting of these, we beleeve we have the concur-
rence of both the Houses of Parliament, for such have beene
their daily Protestations from time to time.

And for the Kings Majesties Opinion herein, he hath by ma-
ny Declarations, solemne Protestations, and religious vowes, be-
fore God and Man, declared himselfe so fully and so freely, that it
is his unchangeable Resolution to live and die in the maintai-
nance of all these; that we hold our selves bounden in reverence
to his person, and in Christianity, to beleeve that he will faith-
fully performe his word with his people.

And we have this further assurance thereof, in that he hath de-
scended so low from his throne as to acknowledge some errors
which have slippt him in his by-past government, and to under-
take not to give way to the like hereafter.

We wish with all our hearts, that you would with the same
ingenuity acknowledge your errors also, and amend them; so
might we soone (by Gods blessing) have our peace restored
again, and by your industries be made a happy nation.

Let us then cleerely and freely expresse in what things we
find our selves greived, which have beene voted, ordered, and
acted by you during this Parliament, whereby the cure inten-
ded is become much worse, then the diseases under which we
formerly languished; and we must with as much clearenesse and
freedome protest against them, if they be not speedily refo-
rmed and remedied.

The

The particulars are these.

1. That under the colour of advancing the true Protestant Religion, encouragement is given to Anabaptists, Brownists and all manner of Sectaries, which multiply in every Corner; which must be reformed, or our true Religion is lost.

2. Under the pretence of hatred of Popery (which we also detest, as far as their superstitions & idolatrous tenets are inconsistent with the true reformed Protestant Religion) the book of Common Prayer (which is established by Law) is cried downe by many, and all decent orders in Gods outward worship, and every man left to the dictate of his private spirit: but let the Lawes against Papists and Sectaries (the two extremes) be put in due execution, we shall thanke you for it.

3. Under the colour of regulating the Ecclesiasticall Courts, and taking away the High Commission Court, all spirituall Jurisdiction (for the coercive part thereof, which is the life of the Law) is taken away, so that now no heynous crimes, inquirable by those Courts, as Adultery, Incest &c. can be punished: No Heresie or Schisme reformed: No Church can be enforced to be repaired: No Church-officers, as Church Wardens &c. are compellable to take upon them their offices, or performe their duties, no not to provide Bread and Wine for the Communion: No Parsons or Vicars can be enforced to attend their Cures, or to give satisfaction for the paines of them who do; No Tithes can be recovered by their Law, nor other Church duties; We beseech you thinke what will be the end of these things at the last.

4. Under the name of reforming the Church Government, ye endeavour to take away the function, and very being of Church Governours as Bishops, and their Assistants, the Deanes and Chapters, so to take away at once the preferments of learned men, and the encouragements of learning: In the name of God let the abuses be taken away, but not the good uses also.

5. For the rectifying of matters amisse in Church Discipline, and some things in Doctrine also, (as is pretended) an Assembly of Divines is propounded to be convoked and consulted with:

with: The matter is right, but the manner is fully amiss, and so we are likely to lose the benefit of the substance for the errors in the circumstance; which is, That in this intended Convocation, the Divines are not nominated by Divines, who can best judge of their abilities (which is the legal way) the greatest part of those who are named, are known or justly suspected to be persons ill disposed to the peace of the Church, and addicted too much to Innovation; you your selves (being all Lay-men) are to be the onely Judges of what shall bee propounded, and what determined; the Divines but your assistantes, and the King is totally to be excluded from having any voice or hand in it: And (as it propounded) this is to be a perpetuall Convocation, if the Houses of Parliament so please.

6. Under the colour of freedom of Preaching, seditious Sermons are preached daily, even in the hearing of many of your selves, who traduce the Kings Sacred Person, slander His Government, and in expresse termes, encourage the maintaining and continuing of this unnaturall and unchristian civill Warre, and yet none are punished for it; which makes us feare that this is, and long hath beene made by some, to be the principall engine to kindle this fire of Hell, to the just scandall of all good men, and slander of our Religion, this doctrine coming so close to that of the Jesuites.

7 And divers worthy, learned, and painefull Preachers have beene committed to prison by you for delivering their consciences freely and religiously, and preaching of obedience to their Sovereigne. these things we observe unto you, as tending mainly against the maintaining and propagation of the true Protestant Religion.

- Touching that part which concerneth the maintaining of the Lawes, we shall observe also some things unto you, wherein your owne practice differs much from your professions: a preposterous way to perswade us, or any other by-standers.

1 Ye assume that power to your selves, that ye by a bare vote without an act of Parliament, may expound or alter a known Law; whereas the Commons house formerly assumed

to themselves no such power, but in order towards the making of a new Law: nor did the House of Peeres challenge any such thing: But they having the power of Judicature, as Judges they proceeded according to the Rules of the knowne Lawes, and upon their honours are answerable for the justnesse of their Judgments, as other Courts are upon their oathes.

2. Ye make your owne orders and ordinances to be as Lawes, and compell them to be observed, and with a stricter hands which may bind the Members of your House in their privileges, but have not nor ever had the force of Lawes, untill by both houses and the Kings Consent they were confirmed.

3 And for your owne observation of the Lawes of the Land, ye take your selves to be so farre above the reach of them, that by your orders and ordinances ye enioyne the Judges and Ministers of Justice to forbear (contrary to their oathes) to proceed in their ordinary courses, where ye please.

4. Ye make an Ordinance to put the Militia of the Kingdome into such hands as ye please, and shall confide in; and this without the King, and expressly against His Command.

5. Ye possesse your selves of the Navy Royall, and appoint Admiralls and other Officers by Sea without the King, and use those ships against the King Himselfe.

6. Ye take the Kings Castles, Forts and Ports, the places of greatest strength in the Kingdome, and keepe them against the King himselfe, as *Hull*, and *Portsmouth*, and *Windfor Castle*; and these three last actions appeare to us to have beene done by Designe, for

7. The pretence at first was for the preservation of the kingdome, against some forreigne Enemy; but when none appeared in many moneths, (and we now beleeeve none such in truth ever were) a warre for the Parliament, against the King himselfe was raised for the preservation of the King.

8 And those who refuse to joyne in this warre with you, or to contribute unto it, with giving or lending of money, horse, armes &c, ye proscribe as Malignants, and persons ill affected to the Common wealth; although we see not how it can be lesse then

then Treason against the King to joyne with you therein.

9 But to all these who are your Commanders or Officers of your Army, ye give large and even profuse entertainments and rewards, but out of our purses, who give you little thanks for it. Thus much may suffice to give a taste how the Lawes are and are likely to be maintained in the course we are now in.

And for the Liberty of our persons, and Propriety of our Estates, we shall say a little in the next place, and by a few particulars judge what we may hope for therein.

1 Ye take the Kings Treasure, ye intercept his revenue, possess his houses of access, and all these for his owne service, & if any attend him or assist him, they are condemned as Malignants, Popish, evill Counsellours and Enemies to the State.

2 Ye have by messages endeavoured to perswade our Brethren of Scotland to joyne with you in your Rebellion against your Sovereigne, and this was not done by some private men alone, but ordered by the Votes of your House.

3 Ye condemn the Rebels in Ireland (and that very justly) for their horrid rebellion there, and yet your selves doe greater and more horrid acts of barbarous hostility against your King, even in his owne person, in England: and when yee have beene charged with it, ye would excuse it by saying, that it was not your fault, but the fault of the King himselfe, and of the Counsellours and Cavaliers about him, that he went himselfe in person into the battell, which he did with that magnanimity and Kingly courage, as will adde to his honour and your shame whilst the world endureth. Thus your action is become odious to God and Man, and your excuse for it ridiculous.

4 And as if ye had shaken off all subjection, and your selves become a State independant, ye have treated by your Agents with forreigne States: Such an usurpation upon Sovereignty as was never yet attempted in this Kingdome.

5 Ye command your owne orders, ordinances, and Declarations to be printed and published *cum privilegio*. But if any thing come from the King, which may truly informe and disabuse the people, ye forbid those to be published, and commit them to prison who do it.

6 The monies advanced by gift, or adventure, or act of Parliament, and souldiers prepared for Ireland to reduce the Rebells there, ye have from time to time diverted to maintaine this unnaturall warre in England; so ye doe visibly loose the Kingdome of Ireland, that ye may be the better enabled to loose the Kingdome of England also.

7 Ye have shewed your selves so averse from peace, that ye have voted there shall be no cessation of Armes, lest by a free treaty a peace might ensue; This is your carriage towards the King himselfe.

And lest ye might be accused to be juster to the subiect then ye are towards your Sovereigne, these things ye have done to the subiect also.

1 Ye have made an Ordinance that the twentieth part of mens estates must be payed towards the maintenance of this Rebellion, and ye appoint those who shall value that twentieth part; and why by the same reason ye take not the tenth part, or the one half, we see not, and for the levying of it ye ordain your Collectors shall distreyn for the sum assessed, and sell the distresse; and if no distresse can be found, the persons of these notable offendours are to be imprisoned, and they and their families banished from their habitations.

2. But lest this should not have the colour of Law sufficient to blind the world, ye have lately made an ordinance for the Inhabitants of the Counties of *Northampton, Rutland, Derby,* &c. to pay and be assessed (by Assessors named in your Act) in imitation of the Statute lately made for the 400000^l. and this, as is probable, shall in convenient time be extended to the whole Kingdome: so ye first cast your selves into a necessity to get money, by making an impious warre upon your Sovereigne, and then out of that necessity ye compell your fellow-subjects (who abominate the warre) to maintaine it.

3. And yee have yet a shorter and a surer way; where ye understand there is any Money, or Plate, or Goods to be had, ye send a Party of Horse or Dragoons, or other strength, to fetch it as out of an enemies Countrey, because the owners are good Subjects to the King, or you suspect them to be so; and that

that alone is crime sufficient to apprehend them, to judge them, and take execution upon them, and all this without the Ceremony of Law, by your absolute and omnipotent power, which cannot erre.

4. You discharge Apprentices and Servants from their Masters services, without consent of their Masters and Dames, and either perswade them or compell them to serve you in your Army against the King: This is indeed the Liberty of the Subject.

5. Ye have imprisoned many for petitioning unto you (as if that alone were a crime) if the matter of the Petition do not flatter you in your present courses.

6. And others yee have imprisoned, some for petitioning, and some for intending to petition to the King, (as those Gentlemen of *Hertfordshire* and *Westminster* :) And yet God be praised, the way is open to petition to him in Heaven, and he will heare us in his good time.

Lastly for your Priviledges of Parliaments.

1. First, ye forbid us to dispute them, ye alone are (as ye say) the Judges of them; but in former ages those also might be and have beene judged by the Lawes of the Kingdome; onely of offences committed by your owne Members against your House, of these ye are the proper Judges; and of the elections of your Members.

2. Yet these we conceive under your good favours, are to be thus confined, that every Member of your House hath and ought to have as free liberty as any of them, to deliver his opinion upon any emergent occasion, and not to be committed, as some have beene; ——— or put out of the House, as others have beene, for speaking freely against the sense of the House, or rather of some members thereof.

3. The Priviledges of your House were never challenged till now, to extend to any Member which should commit Treason, or Felony: but ye have now declared that no Member of the House, nor any others imployed by you in this horrid Rebellion, should be questioned for Treason, but in Parliament; or at least by leave of the House.

4. Ye have made a close Committee (as you call it) wherein a very few Members of your House onely are privy to your Counsels, and what those few conclude upon, is summarily reported to the House, and that taken upon trust by an implicit faith of all the rest.

5. Many of the present Members of your House have had their elections questioned, but if they incline to those positions which ye lay downe to your selves to uphold your tyrannicall and usurped Government: ye are so busied in the great affaires of State, that in two yeares space (for so long and longer yee have continued this Parliament already) yee have no leisure to determine those questions, lest you should loose such a one from your party.

6. Sometimes when a matter of importance hath bene in debate, ye have put it to the question, and upon the question it hath bene determined, and the same question againe resumed at another time, better prepared for the purpose, and determined quite contrary; this wee are well assured was not the Priviledge of former Parliaments, when many of us were Members thereof.

We do beleeeve ye have many just Priviledges for the freedom of your persons for freedom of speech; but wee never did beleeeve that ye had a Priviledge to take the Scepter into your hands, to levy a Warre against your King, and to compell others to joyne with you in so execrable an act. Wee wish from our hearts that all these Observations were but fables and fictions, (as we have met with many from you to amuse us) but they are all undeniably true; our conditions therefore are most miserable, when thus instead of maintaining the true Protestant Religion, the Lawes of the Land, the just Liberty and Propriety of the Subject, and just Priviledges of Parliament, they are all of them radically and fundamentally destroyed, and that by you, whose duties and professions are daily to the contrary. And if any thing can be added to our misery, it is this, that we cannot see through the time, when this intolerable yoke of slavery which ye put upon your fellow subjects, shall have an end; seeing by the art of a few, yee have contrived an Act wherby

whereby ye have perfidiously over-reached both the King and people, to make this present Parliament to be perpetuall at your pleasures, that so your arbitrary power and tyranny over the Kingdome might be perpetuated.

Yet one thing more may be aded to our unhappinesse,

Fuisse felices. We were lately a happy people, and are now on a sudden reduced to such a depth of unhappinesse, that we are made a spectacle to the whole world, and the very object of their scorne: For,

We are (before we were aware of it) cast into a warre, a ci-vill Warre, an irreligious and barbarous Warre, against our So-veraigne, our naturall Leige Lord.

We are put into an inevitable way of poverty,

By being wasted in all quarters and corners of the Kingdome one by another:

By loosing our commerce at home, it being intercepted by the Armies, and almost no debts paid, occasioned specially by the priviledges of your Members, and such as ye priviledge:

By loosing our trade abroad, it being cast into the hands of strangers.

We loose our season for tillage and husbandry, which must of necessity introduce a Famine; and Famine doth but usher in a Pestilence: And Warre, Famine, and Pestilence, are the three great and fearefull Judgements of God upon a Nation.

Nothing can redeeme us out of these calamities, but a speedy Peace; and to prepare it a cessation of Armes: And then by good Lawes, as yee have already happily begun, to amend what is or hath beene amisse, without plucking up the foundations of Government.

Wee beseech you therefore at the last, to lay aside your affections, and in your judgements to provide for us, and for your selves, and for the honour of our Religion, the peace of our consciences, the preservation of our lives and estates, and for the salvation of our poore soules, to have pittie upon us, bind up our bleeding wounds; cure the distractions of the time, and make up the breaches betweene the King and people, occasioned onely by a mis-understanding.

And if these our *Petitions*, or *Complaints*, or *Remonstrances* (call them what ye will) may prevaile with you; wee doubt not, but that the King of His grace and goodnesse will be intreated to bury all your by-past actions in an act of oblivion, that neither the present age, nor the ages to come, may to the shame of this Nation, have cause to remember what hath happened here in this last and worst age of the world.

But if all this, and all which in your great judgements yee can adde unto it, shall not move you; We doe and shall protest to all the world, that with the hazzard of our lives and fortunes, and of all we can call ours; we shall endeavour to vindicate our selves from these inhumane courses. *Sed meliora speramus.* We hope for better things.

And we shall incessantly pray to God to perfect our hopes, by blessing your Counsels.

FINIS.

